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Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 00470 150114Z
ACTION INR-07

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INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 470

NOFORN

DEPT FOR INR/P; HONG KONG FOR PPO--SMITH

E.O.11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: AINR, PINT, ECON, CH
SUBJECT: ACQUISITION OF THREE PROVINCIAL NEWSPAPERS

1. USLO HAS ACQUIRED FEBRUARY 1 ISSUE OF HENAN (HONAN) RIBAO, FEBRUARY 18 ISSUE OF SHANGHAI'S JIEFANG RIBAO, AND FEBRUARY 27 ISSUE OF SIAN'S SHANXI (SHENSI) RIBAO.

2. HONAN RIBAO FRONTPAGES AN ACCOUNT OF JANUARY 26-28 MASS CRITICISM MEETINGS HELD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE HONAN MILITARY DISTRICT. ATTENDED BY MD COMMANDER CHANG SHU-CHIH AND COMMISSAR HU SHANG-LI (WHO REPORTEDLY DELIVERED SPEECHES), THE CONFERENCES FOCUSED ON CRITICISM AND EXPOSURE OF "THE GANG OF FOUR'S BLACK HAND STRETCHED INTO HONAN" AND HIS CLOSE LINKS WITH "THOSE TWO BAD SCOUNDRELS IN UNITS UNDER THE PROVINCIAL MILITARY DISTRICT WHO RALLIED AROUND THE GANG OF FOUR." THE "BLACK HAND"--PRESUMABLY A REFERENCE TO PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN TANG CHI-SHAN--AND HIS ALLIES WERE CHARGED WITH "UNPARDONABLE CRIMES" IN CREATING CHAOS WITHIN THE ARMY.

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3. HENEN RIBAO ALSO PRINTS A LONG ARTICLE BY THE "HOPEI MUNICIPALITY COMMUNIST PARTY COMMITTEE MAS CRITICISM GROUP" EXPOSING EFFORTS--EVIDENTLY SUCCESS-FUL--BY THE GANG'S "BLADK AHAND" TO DISRUPT HOPE'S COAL MINING. CHARGING THAT THE GANG OF FOUR AND THEIR "BLACK HAND" HAD USED THE ANTI-TENG CAMPAIGN AS PRETEXT FOR THEIR CONSPIRATIORIAL ACTIVITIES, THE ARTICLE CLAIMS THAT

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THE "BLACK HAND" POSTULATED "AS TO WHETHER OR NOT HOPEI IS CONFUSED, THE KEY IS COAL; WITH COAL CONFUSED THE MATTER WILL BE EASY TO HANDLE." AS A RESULT, "SOME COAL MINES STOPPED PRODUCTION...AND OUTPUT DECLINED PRECIPITATELY."

4. THE SHENSI RIBAO'S PAGE ONE FEATURES THE TEXT OF A FEBRUARY 23 SIX-POINT DIRECTIVE BY THE SHENSI PROVINCIAL PARTY AND REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEES CONCERNING SPRING PRODUCTION GOALS; BULLETINS FROM LINT'UNG HSIEN AND HSINGP'ING HSIEN ON HANDLING OF SPRING PLANTING ARE PRINTED BENEATH THE DIRECTIVE. CAUTIONING AGAINST "BLIND OPTIMISM," THE DIRECTIVE AND ARTICLES PAINT A RATHER BLEAK PICTURE OF THE PROVINCE'S AGRICULTURAL SITUATION. POINT ONE IN THE DIRECTIVE CALLS FOR "RESOLUTELY STRIKING BACK AT THE SABOTAGE ACTIVITIES OF CLASS ENEMIES; FURTHER STEPPING UP MARKET CONTROL; CONTINUOUSLY WAGING STRUGGLE AGAINST CORRUPTION, THEFT, AND SPECULATIVE ACTIVITIES; SERIOUSLY RATIONALIZING THE MISTAKEN TENDENCIES OF OUTWARD FLOW OF LABOR, FREE TRADE AND FREE CULTIVATION; AND CONCENTRATING LABOR ON THE FRONT LINE OF AGRICULTURAL PROCUCTION." POINT TWO NOTES THAT THE "CURRENT SPRING DROUGHT CONTINUES TO DEVELOP, AND IN SOME PLACE THE DEVELOPMENT OF WHEAT HAS BEEN POOR..." THE LINT'UNG HSIEN NEWS DISPATCH ELABORATES ON "UNFAVORABLE FACTORS" AFFECTING THE WHEAT CROP, SPECIFICALLY THE PAST WINTER'S UNUSUALLY LOW PRECIPITATION AND LOWER-THAN-NORMAL TEMPERATURES. MOREOVER,
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AGRICULTURAL DISCIPLINE HAD SEEMINGLY SUFFERED SOMEWHAT; THE HSIEN PARTY COMMITTEE HAD FOUND IT NECESSARY TO CRITICIZE DURING A RECENT COTTON CONFERENCE THE "MISTAKEN THINKING" THAT ONE SHOULD "PLACE MAJOR IMPORTANCE ON GRAIN AND MINOR ON COTTON" AND THAT "IF YOU CULTIVATE COTTON YOU SUFFER" (CHUNG-MIAN CH'IH-K'UEI).

5. USLO WILL POUCH PAPERS TO DEPT AND HONG KONG.
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